

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph extending from page 16, line 14 to page 16, line 25, with the following rewritten paragraph:

If the data set is centered about, and highly peaked at zero, or can be efficiently mapped to zero, then the present invention can be combined with ~~co-~~pending U.S. patent application "~~Efficiently Entropy Coding The Most Probable Value~~", Sr. No. ~~___/___,___~~ filed on ~~___,___,___~~ number 6,522,270 entitled "Method of Coding Frequently Occurring Values" and assigned to the assignee of this patent application. Since the locations of the zero values are exhaustively cataloged through some other means in the above mentioned patent ~~application~~, using the present scheme allows the user to eliminate the representation of the zero integer (the most probable value or MPV) for encoding and decoding procedures. In other words, the initial sequence of zeros can be shortened to length L-1 (L is now ≥ 1 since zero is not included), which reduces the length of the coded integers by one. Combining the present scheme with the ~~co-pending~~ patent application mentioned above, both trailing sign bit methods work equally well for encoding values that are symmetrically distributed about zero.